

PRICE ONE CENT.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1891.

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## LAST EDITION. A HORROR!

## Terrible Disaster in the Fourth Ave- nue Tunnel.

## Eight Lives Lost and a Car on Fire.

## Human Beings Roasted to Death in View of Spectators.

## The Deadly Car Stove Swelled the Ca- tastrophe.

## One of the Most Startling Ac- cidents that New York Has Ever Seen.

## A New Haven Local Telescoped a Train of Seven Cars.

Department of truck No. 16, was overcome by smoke and taken to his home.

Leeds Fowler, engineer of New Haven local slightly injured by jumping from engine. Taken to Grand Central Depot.

At 7.15 the 7.05 New Haven local passenger train, north bound, approached the station at Eighty-sixth street.

A mist filled the tunnel and the lights had partially failed because of the storm of snow and hail which had lasted all morning.

A train of sleeping cars was ahead on the same track as the New Haven train.

This was run into by the New Haven local, which was going at a high rate of speed.

The crash was terrific, and both trains, engines and cars, were completely telescoped and smashed to atoms.

The cars of the forward train caught fire from a stove, and the flames rose high above the wreck.

Two alarms of fire were sent out, followed immediately by two calls for ambulances.

The latter were responded to by four ambulances from the Presbyterian hospital.

When the police, doctors and firemen reached the scene they found approach difficult by reason of the complete wreck of the cars, combined with the smoke, flames and the narrow limits of the tunnel.



LOOKING FOR THE DEAD.

Groans from injured and apparently dying people added to the terror of the scene.

The engineer of the New Haven train, it was said, was the first victim. He was reported killed, but he afterwards turned up with wounds which were not dangerous.

At 8.45 the body of a woman, burned to a crisp, was brought to the surface.

She was one of the car cleaners on the first train.

At 9 o'clock it was believed that ten dead or dying were still under the wreck.

Officials of the New York and New Haven Railroad gave the following statement:

The doomed train was a "shop train," composed of seven Boston and Albany cars, bound for the yard at Mott Haven, which left the Grand Central station at 7 A. M.

The collision occurred near Eighty-sixth street, in the Fourth avenue tunnel.

It was with another train going on the same track, and the first train ran into it from behind.

The last car of the forward train took fire. It was not then known how many passengers were killed, as other passengers were still supposed to be buried in the wreck.

The smash-up was so complete that the doctors consider it scarcely within the bounds of possibility that any could come out of it with chances of life.

The wreck blocked all traffic for several hours.

The scene at the surface on Fourth avenue was one long to be remembered.

The news of the catastrophe spread like wildfire and squads of police detailed to maintain order had all they could do to keep back the eager crowd.

Men and women tried to reach the door of the underground railroad depot, which is within a few yards of where the collision occurred.

Many were in tears and inquired anxiously for the names of those who had been rescued or whose fate was known.

Almost immediately after the cars struck Conductor Hutchinson, of the New Haven local, Mr. Frederick Motzer, collector for the Marvin Safe Company, and a brakeman ran forward.

The sleeper, in which the engine of the local had buried itself for fully ten feet, was already on fire.

From one of the windows of the burning car protruded the head and shoulders of a man. The pilot of the engine plucked his legs and body to the timbers of the wreck.

Smoke and fire were around him.

The agony in his face was terrible. His cries were heartrending.

"For God's sake kill me," he screamed. "Help me, I am burning alive."

Then from within the car came cries and screams of agony.

The three men took the burning man by the shoulders and tried to drag him from his awful fate, but he was too firmly wedged. He implored them to kill him.

The fire grew apace. The top of the car was ablaze. The lead roof melted, and the molten metal fell upon the would-be rescuers. Still they continued in their efforts to save the doomed man. Then a down train rushed through the side tunnel, and clouds of black smoke, caused by the draught, enveloped the burning car. The three men caught a glimpse of an agonized face and imploring arms, and then smoke and sparks hid everything.

When the firemen arrived with their hose the smoke had cleared a little and the man in the car window was still alive, but seemingly unconscious. A stream of water was directed on him. After the flames about him had been quenched the firemen tried to pull him from the wreck. They could not succeed, and he was not taken out until the timbers had been chopped away. He presented a horrible spectacle. His hair and beard were burnt off and his limbs and body below his shoulders were frightfully charred.

At 10 o'clock it was reported that five people had been taken out, three dead and two injured.

The catastrophe is attributed to the fact that the forward train displayed no headlight on its rear.

The headlight was on the northward end of the engine and could not be seen by the engineer of the local.

**TAKING OUT THE BODIES.**

The Scene as Witnessed Soon After the Catastrophe.

An EVENING WORLD reporter who was the first to arrive found a scene that beggared description.

Smoke and steam were still escaping from the apartments in the tunnel at Eighty-fourth and Eighty-fifth streets, and through the one at Eighty-fourth street the reporter descended into the dark tunnel by means of a ladder.

Immediately before him, almost directly under Eighty-fourth street, lay a horrible mass of wreckage with hardly any semblance of form or shape, in which the police and firemen were busily searching for the bodies of victims.

Boston and Albany day coaches 39 and 178 were completely mashed together into one on the western track, while parts of the wreckage lay across the eastern track.

Car 39 was the last on the doomed train, and carried the unfortunate victims of the horror. The force of the collision had jammed it completely through car 178, just ahead of it, and nothing was left of the latter except charred splinters and a tangled mass of wheels and tracks.

Broken car seats and cushions were strewn around, and here and there were pieces of the deadly car-stoves, which set fire to the wreck and added to the horror of the calamity.

Ahead of car 178 was dining car 217, the rear end of which was smashed to kindling wood. Daniel Culbert, the colored cook, was in this car when he was injured.

The other cars in the doomed train were sleepers 218 and 219, smoker 318. These were not damaged. Neither was New York Central Engine 836, which drew the first train.

Policeman Hanson, of the East Eighty-eighth street station, who was one of the first to arrive at the scene, said to an EVENING WORLD reporter:

"At 7 o'clock this morning the 'shop train' containing Boston and Albany cars pulled out of the Grand Central depot for the Mott Haven yard, where the cars were to be overhauled, cleaned and inspected."

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rapidly approaching the Grand Central depot at the time.

"The engine was on the Eastern track, right opposite the point of contact of both trains, when the crash came."

"The switcher was thrown from the track, but otherwise uninjured, and Engineer Bailey and five men on the engine escaped even being scratched by jumping."

At 10 o'clock Coroner Levy arrived at the scene of the collision and directed that all the dead bodies be removed to the Morgue.

At 10.30 the ambulances were all dismissed, as it was evident that there were no more injured to be cared for, and that only dead victims remained in the wreck.

During the search for the bodies, traffic was stopped on both tracks, and all trains were run on the local tracks on either side of the main tunnel.

Fireman John Goodfield, of Truck 16, who was overcome by the smoke, was one of the first to enter the blinding tunnel.

He was formerly an expressman, and knowing the construction of the New Haven and Hartford cars perfectly, rushed right into the thickest of the smoke in his effort to save human lives.

His zeal proved fruitless, however, for he himself was overpowered by the thick smoke and had to be taken from the tunnel by his comrades.

Rev. Father Walker, S. J., of St. Lawrence's Church, just opposite the scene of the collision, went down the tunnel as soon as he heard of it, but the only man who might have needed immediate religious service of any kind was a Protestant, John Hancock, the injured car-cleaner.

At 12.30 the firemen ceased their labors of searching for bodies in the telescoped cars, having satisfied themselves that no other were there.

This determination was reached after a long search, which failed to show any signs of a body. A stream of water, however, was kept flowing on the debris.

C. H. Platt, General Manager of the Harlem line, and D. B. McCoy, Superintendent of the New York Central Road, visited the scene of the accident and a large force of men were put to work removing the debris.

A wrecking train was also sent for the work of conveying the wrecked cars to Spuyten Duyvil was commenced. The last vestige of the wreck was carried away from the scene of the awful catastrophe at 1.30.

After the bodies of the dead had been removed to the East Eighty-eighth street station hundreds of people called there to see if they could recognize any of them.

Among the callers was a boy of sixteen, who said he thought the body of the woman who was charred to a crisp was that of his mother.

He was not sure of the identification and left, saying that he would bring his father, who would make sure.

Coroner Levy later ordered all the bodies to be removed to the Morgue and the tide of seekers after friends and relatives was turned in that direction.

John Hancock, the young seventeen-year-old car-cleaner, whose legs were crushed and burned, and who was taken to the Presbyterian Hospital, died there at 1.15 P. M.

**MANAGER TOUCEY'S STATEMENT.**

He Lays the Blame to the New Haven Road's Deadly Car Stoves.

At the office of Supt. O. M. Shephard, of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad in the Grand Central Station, the Chief Clerk said, to an EVENING WORLD reporter, that reports had been received from the engineer, fireman and conductor of the New Haven local No. 10, which left the depot at 7.05 o'clock this morning.

The locomotive was in charge of Engineer Fowler and Conductor George Hutchinson. The fireman's name is Goodale.

They left the scene of the accident soon after it occurred and reported at the Superintendent's office, but could give no clear account of the disaster nor information as to its extent.

The first report received at the office was to the effect that Engineer Fowler's mangled body lay under his engine, but his appearance in person contradicted that story.

The engineer and fireman had sustained but a few slight injuries.

The train which was run into, he said, was a "shop" train, consisting of New York Central and New Haven empty coaches, being drawn by a yard engine to the Mott Haven yard for storage.

The clerk had heard that the cars were on fire but did not know how many were killed, though he had heard that one car cleaner had been fatally injured.

A later report received by him was to the effect that six employees in the "shop" train were dead.

The only injury which the New Haven train sustained was a separation of the locomotive proper from its tender.

The cars were not injured and the train was backed down to the Grand Central station yard and the passengers sent out on train No. 9, which left at 8 o'clock.

This is an express train, but it was an accommodation local to New Haven. It was sent through the side tunnel, which was not blocked.

General Manager J. M. Toucey, of the New York Central Railroad, gave a more detailed account of the accident.

He said that the "shop" train had stopped in the tunnel for some unaccountable reason, and the engineer of the New Haven train must have disregarded the block signal, which is always displayed on such an occasion.

The New Haven locomotive crashed into the rear car of the "shop" train, and the empty cars were piled in a jumbled mass on both the up and down tracks in the main tunnel.

A light New York Central engine was coming south on the main down track at the time of the accident, and that crashed into the overturned cars, increasing the horror.

The deadly car stove again got in its work, for that road is the only one which has disregarded the law which prevents the heating of cars by stoves on railroads operated in this State.

The overturned stove set fire to the car, a conflagration was the result, and the employees who were imprisoned in the cars were subjected to the added and greater danger of roasting to death in the flames.

Mr. Toucey sent Supt. McCoy, of the Hudson River Division, and Supt. Platt, who has charge of the yard and tracks in the city for the Grand Central Station Association, to the scene as soon as he was informed of the accident.

At 10.30 o'clock he had received a report to the effect that the bodies of eight employees, who were in the "shop" train, had been removed from the burning wreck.

How many more were imprisoned in the cars he could not say, nor had he learned the names of any of the victims.

The General Superintendent said that there would be no delay of traffic, because all trains would be run in and out of the stations on schedule time through the side tunnels, which have been used only for the running of local trains.

Hearing that the firemen were complaining that their work of extinguishing the flames in the tunnel was being hindered by reason of the constant running of trains, he said that there was no doubt of that.

The accident occurred to the rock out, where the openings into the tunnel are few and the facilities for getting fire-hose into the tunnel without crossing the side tracks where trains are running are fewer still.

General Manager Toucey at 11.30 received the following official report from Supt. McCoy, who was at the scene of the wreck:

"Two rear cars of the shop train were telescoped by the New Haven local. The last coach of the shop train was occupied by car cleaners and car repairers on their way to the Mott Haven yard, where they were to go on duty."

"Five men were killed instantly and one man had both legs broken."

"The shop train was moving slowly, about five miles an hour, when the New Haven train ran into it."

"The New Haven train was thought to be running at the rate of thirty miles an hour."

Supt. McCoy reported that the telescoped cars were New Haven coaches and had caught fire from the stoves which they carry.

The bodies of the dead employees were burned.

The fire was extinguished before much damage was done, he reported, only the interior of the coaches being burned.

The light switch engine which collided with the wreck coming south suffered no injury, and was simply derailed.

General Manager Toucey said that the explanation of Engineer Fowler, of the New Haven train, as to the cause of the accident was that the danger signal which was first displayed was changed to a white one after he got into the danger block, and he thought the track was clear.

The block-signal system is in operation in the tunnel.

By this system, when a red signal is displayed at the signal man's cabin, a green danger light is shown 1,000 feet further down the track to warn approaching engineers and giving them a sufficient space in which to stop their trains.

Mr. Toucey says that Engineer Fowler admits having seen the green light, and setting on its warning; but he said that after he passed the green light he held it at the signal station was changed to white, and he proceeded, thinking the danger was removed.

**VICE-PRES. WEBB'S STATEMENT.**

He Disclaims Responsibility for the Central and Harlem Roads.

The following statement was made at 1.30 this afternoon by Third Vice-President H. Walter Webb, of the New York Central:

"The accident happened on what is known as the Harlem line, which is operated and managed by an organization known as 'Grand Central Station.' It includes all tracks between Forty-second street and Mott Haven Junction—the junction north of the Harlem River."

The management of this line is entirely separate and distinct from that of the New York Central, the Harlem or the New Haven roads.

There is a general manager of the line elected by the three roads above named. The general manager has entire control of the operation of the line between the points named and trains and men are under his control while passing between these points.

"The following is the report made to me by Mr. Charles H. Platt, the General Manager of Grand Central Station."

"The engineer and fireman of the New Haven train claims that the home signal at Seventy-second street was clear."

"The conductor of the New Haven train claims that he heard no bell."

"If the signal was received the bell should have rung. This is an extra precautionary signal."

The number of people in the shop train is not known.

"The fire in the shop train was caused either by a lamp, the explosion of the head-light or by car stoves."

"The signal man at Eighty-sixth street, at which point the Seventy-second street home signal and distant signal are located had not unlocked the Seventy-second street signal for the New Haven train when the collision occurred."

"The operator at Seventy-second street had not cleared either the home or distant signal at Seventy-second street and is substantiated in these statements by the track walker, who was in the Seventy-second street car when the New Haven train passed and he states that the lever was blocked."

The track walker made an examination of the Seventy-second street home signal and found it to be at danger and lamp burning brightly.

The track foreman said he saw the Seventy-second street signal at danger when the New Haven train passed.

"The foreman was right by the signal. I have examined the entire mechanical and electrical system of signals and find every thing in first-class order."

"The operator at Seventy-second street immediately notified Eighty-sixth street that the New Haven train had passed his signal at danger."

"The signals are interlocked, and it is impossible to clear the Seventy-second street signal when a train is in the section, which was the case on this occasion."

**SAW A MAN BURNED ALIVE.**

A Story of Horror, Told by a Passenger on the Outward Train.

Mr. Frederick Motzer, of Brooklyn, who is a collector for the Marvin Safe Company, was a passenger on the 7.01 train outward from the Grand Central, on a business trip. To all

"They worked like leavers then. One man held up the doomed man's head, which had dropped down on the window ledge. Another directed a stream of water upon him. Then, with axes, they cut away the timbers and lifted him to the ground."

"He was unconscious and past suffering, but still breathed. Two policemen carried him up the track to a point where they could reach the street and an ambulance, but he was dead before they got there."

"The flames had not disfigured his head and face, except that his hair was burned off, and he heard if he had had any. Below his shoulders his body and legs were roasted and charred almost beyond recognition as a human being."

"During this time we could hear from the interior of the burning car the shrieks and moans of others whom we could not see. The tunnel was filled with dense, black smoke, and

"The heat was like an oven."

"I saw another man gotten out. He was not much burned, but appeared to have been suffocated. He was breathing when taken out and laid upon the ground, but died in a moment after."

"By this time I realized that I had myself been bruised and severely shocked, and seeing that I could be of no further use, I came away. This was about 8 o'clock."

"It was an awful scene. Words cannot describe the horror of it. The noise of the hissing steam, the crackling of the flames, the shrieks of the people imprisoned in the furnace-like wreck, the roar of trains passing through the other tunnels, the glare of the burning cars, the darkness behind, the shouts of the firemen and others coming to the rescue—it was a pandemonium."

"As nearly as I can recollect, there were eighteen passengers in our train, the conductor, two brakemen, the baggage-master, the engineer and fireman—twenty-four in all. I do not know that any of these was seriously hurt."

**A GALLANT RESCUE.**

How One Imperiled Man Was Pulled Up to the Street.

Claude Bernard, who lives at 84 East Eighty-fifth street and is connected with Tiffany's, was passing in Eighty-fifth street a little after 7 o'clock. He says:

"I heard a noise like that made when an engine's cylinder head is blown out, and looking I saw steam coming out at the opening in the roof of the tunnel at Eighty-fifth street."

"In a moment I heard shrieks and cries for help. I ran, and, leaping on the iron railing that guards the opening, I looked down and saw a man climbing upon the top of a car below and crying for help."

"I shouted for a ladder, and some of the bystanders ran to fetch ladders and ropes."

"Then a slim young man stepped forward and volunteered to be lowered down into the hole. It was only a few feet to the car top, and this young man suggested that if he were lowered by strong hands the man on the car could reach his feet and by hanging on could be drawn up to safety."

"This was done. The man in the car was now surrounded by smoke, and flames could be seen only a few feet distant."

"The man on the car roof seized the feet of the daring young man, and we drew both men up to the level of the street, while the crowd cheered."